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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT(S): ROBERT P. HEPFER, CRAIG ) PATENT APPLICATION  
                   T. MILLER, GREGORY A. ) Confirmation No.  
                   NORENBERG, THOMAS G. )  
                   ATTIG, JOHN R. BUDGE )  
   )  
 APPLICATION NO.: ) Group Art Unit: 1621  
   )  
 FILED: August 21, 2003 ) Examiner:  
   )  
 FOR: TWO-STAGE PROCESS FOR THE )  
       HYDROGENATION OF MALEIC ACID ) Attorney Docket No.:  
       TO 1,4-BUTANEDIOL ) 37,241-01

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Please amend the above-identified application as follows:

**Amendments** to the claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 5 of this paper.

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A continuous process for the production of at least one of gamma-butyrolactone, 1,4-butanediol and tetrahydrofuran comprising:

- (A) a first hydrogenation zone and a second hydrogenation zone connected in series,
- (B) supplying to the first hydrogenation zone a feedstream comprising maleic acid,